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C O N F I D E N T I A L KIEV 000610

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/15/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: UKRAINE: WORKING TO SECURE RADA APPROVAL FOR
FOREIGN MILITARY EXERCISES IN UKRAINE IN 2006

REF: A. KIEV 553

[1](#)B. HERBST-KRAMER FEB 14 EMAIL

[1](#)C. 05 KIEV 4590

Classified By: Ambassador, reason 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In the aftermath of the February 9 failure of the Rada (parliament) to approve the measure authorizing foreign troops to participate in military exercises in Ukraine in 2006 (ref A), Defense Minister Hrytsenko asked Ambassador late February 14 to approach Party of Regions leader Yanukovych ahead of an expected revote the week of February 20, stressing the importance of such exercises to Ukraine's national interest. Ambassador met Yanukovych February 15 and noted that Yanukovych had supported such annual resolutions during his tenure as PM, and that a vote in favor could signal Regions' intent to govern responsibly were it to return to power after the elections. Yanukovych said that he would discuss the issue with his faction leader and get back to Ambassador on the issue. End summary.

Handwritten note from DefMin Hrytsenko: please help

[1](#)2. (C) Defense Minister Hrytsenko sent a handwritten note to Ambassador late February 14 requesting assistance in securing Rada approval for the bill approving foreign troop participation in military exercises on Ukrainian soil. (The bill had failed to secure the 226 votes necessary for passage in a 215-to-11 vote February 9.) Noting that Yanukovych seemed willing to listen to Ambassador's counsel, Hrytsenko suggested that Yanukovych might prove receptive to a pitch that, as Prime Minister, he had annually sent similar such bills to the Rada for approval, and that the bill was about Ukraine's credibility and predictability as a partner. For his part, Hrytsenko pledged to work with the rest of the Rada. (Note: Only two members of the governing coalition partner Socialist Party voted for the bill February 9; ten members of Rada Speaker Lytvyn's faction also failed to vote. The 215-11 February 9 vote fell 11 votes shy of approval, with 200 MPs not present or choosing not to vote.)

Yanukovych: I'll look into it and get back to you

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador met Yanukovych February 15. Noting the February 9 vote and Regions' non-participation, Ambassador reminded Yanukovych that he had supported such bills while PM, that the training was important for Ukraine's military, and that a supportive vote by Regions when the measure came up for reapproval would send a signal that it intended to govern responsibility were he/the party to return to government after the elections.

[1](#)4. (C) Yanukovych replied that while he was aware the vote had occurred, he had not been in Kiev February 9 and did not know the reason for his party's non-vote. He said that he would look into the issue, talk to the Party's Rada faction leader, and get back to Ambassador.

Comment: a pitch worth making

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: Yanukovych told us last November that, while his pre-election actions and public comments in the lead-up to March parliamentary elections would be focused on protecting his base against the incursions of the further left Communists and Natalya Vitrenko, he would be ready to work constructively on a range of issues after the election, presuming he and Regions returned to government (ref C). The pitch for a constructive vote on an issue of Ukraine's national interest before the election provides an interesting opportunity for Yanukovych to send a signal that he and his party can and are willing to approach matters of national interest in a non-partisan manner. The bill could pass even without Regions' support if the government succeeds in maintaining party discipline among pro-government forces, keeping Tymoshenko bloc votes on board, and convincing the coalition-member Socialist Party and Rada Speaker Lytvyn to provide additional votes, but none of these is necessarily a given.

[1](#)6. (U) Visit Embassy Kiev's classified website at:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.
HERBST